

THE MAGAZINE OF MERION MERCY ACADEMY

# Mater<sup>®</sup> Matters

SUMMER 2018



## OPENING COMMENTS

### MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL: Sister Christine McCann, RSM

When I learned the school year theme for 2017-18 was “Rise Up in Mercy,” it came as no surprise. Yes, the new building—opened at the start of school—stands tall and bursts with spirit, animation, and creativity. What a joy to see Mercy, learning, and innovation in action!

Yet, the students are on the rise too—awards in everything from art to underwater robotics, academic accolades, such as our 13 National Merit Scholars, and participation in countless service projects—some in our backyard and others that reached the needs of people in developing countries, and countless distinctions in our 72 clubs, teams, and organizations. Our student body consists of passionate, purposeful, and persistent scholars who work in unity while maintaining their own unique voices.

When I had the opportunity to introduce myself to the students, I fielded many thoughtful questions. As you might imagine, they wanted to know more about me and my enthusiasm for the mission of MMA. I quickly recognized the group as mature, funny, insightful, and invested in MMA. In fact, an alumna recently shared that she has “never met a Merion Mercy student who wasn’t brilliant, poised, and connected to the world beyond the school halls.” I believe she is right!

It has been my pleasure to join Merion Mercy’s vibrant community, where our students are formed in their



Christian identity and the Mercy tradition and where they acquire the tools and skills they need to graduate as confident, competent, and compassionate young women. And, when we combine these students with talented teachers and administrators, supportive parents, loyal alumnae, a hardworking Board of Trustees, and an army of supporters, I see nothing but a bright future for MMA. The passion for MMA, the unique gifts of each person, the participation and engagement of so many, and the commitment to our shared Mercy values is quite inspiring. I look forward to the year to come, eager to embrace the opportunities for our continued growth and committed to build on MMA’s distinguished legacy.

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

### Bill O’Shea P’06, ’13

Effective July 1, 2018, I took on the role of Chair of the Board of Trustees. My wife, Mary, and I remain grateful for what Merion has provided our daughters (Caitlin O’Shea Palmer ’06 and Christina O’Shea ’13). It feels very natural to give back to a place that has given my family and me so much!

I also serve as the Chair of the Head of School Search Committee, a capable and highly committed 10-person team. The search process for the next Head of School is underway. The Board of Trustees sincerely appreciates our community’s support throughout the last few months. From the animated open sessions to the insightful focus groups, from the spirit of collaboration to the generous support on all levels, I am humbled by and grateful for our Merion

Mercy family. With our community and its invaluable input and with the recommendation of the Search Committee, the Board looks forward to naming our next Head of School in the coming months.

We are committed to making this process as inclusive as possible. We look forward to keeping our constituents well-informed and involved as we go through the various stages of our search. Please visit our Head of School Search website page for updates: [www.merion-mercy.com/hossearch](http://www.merion-mercy.com/hossearch).

This is a new chapter in Merion Mercy’s rich narrative. While remaining faithful to the precepts our community holds dear, we will position our beloved MMA for the brightest future imaginable.

**HEAD OF SCHOOL**

Sister Christine McCann, RSM

**CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER**

Kelley Kuyat

**MAGAZINE STAFF****MAGAZINE EDITOR**

Kristina Stanton Cawley '90

**LAYOUT AND DESIGN**

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**ADVANCEMENT OFFICE STAFF****DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS**

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**DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC MARKETING**

Christina Feo Penezic '80

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**IN THIS ISSUE***Summer 2018 magazine*

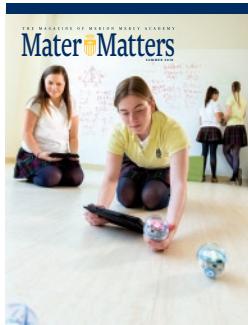
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**FEATURES****10 Rooms to Grow**

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**ON THE COVER**

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# Around Campus

## 13 NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARS—5 NAMED NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS



Seniors Julia Halas, Margaret Roccato, Kelly Thomas, C. Sumin Walker, and Jordyn Young were named National Merit Finalists. First honored as

Semifinalists, their test scores were among the top 1% of the nearly 1.6 million test takers. They were recognized as Finalists, which qualified them for Merit

Scholarships. The Merit Scholarship awards are chosen from the Finalist group based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation also named the following eight MMA seniors as National Merit Commended Students: Caroline Hecht, Madeline Larkin, Megan Leahy, Jessica Lehman, Kathryn Lynch, Gabriela Marziano, Erin Mullen, and Mary Elizabeth Passarella.

These academically talented students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.6 million students who entered the 2018 competition by taking the 2016 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

**Front row:** Jessica Lehman, Julia Halas, Mary Elizabeth Passarella, Kelly Thomas, Caroline Hecht, and Margaret Roccato; **Back row:** Jordyn Young, Erin Mullen, Gabriela Marziano, C. Sumin Walker, Kathryn Lynch, Madeline Larkin, and Megan Leahy



### Christina Alexandre '18 Named QuestBridge Scholar

**CHRISTINA ALEXANDRE '18** was awarded a full four-year scholarship to Amherst College through QuestBridge Match, which provides a single, internet-based meeting point which links exceptional students with colleges, scholarship providers, enrichment programs, employers, and organizations seeking students who have excelled despite obstacles.

Christina is part of MMA's National Honor Society, Social Studies National Honor Society, and French National Honor Society. She is vice president of French Club and vice president of Junior Statesmen of America. She is interested in Psychology, French, and Biology and intends on majoring/double majoring/minoring in these subjects at Amherst College. She shares, "In college, I also hope to study abroad in a Francophone country and participate in French, social justice, dance, or musical activities, among others. My future goals include becoming a doctor and one day working with Doctors without Borders or Médecins Sans Frontières. I aspire to give back to my Philadelphia community and Haitian community/Haiti, among others in need."

## COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS

**Applause! Bravo! Cheers!**

Merion Mercy Music Theater (MMMT) produced *As It Is in Heaven* by Arlene Hutton as its fall drama. The play is a moving portrayal of upheaval caused when the utopian existence of an 1830's Shaker community in Kentucky is threatened by the arrival of newcomers claiming to see angels. Soon all the young women are receiving spiritual "gifts" of songs, drawings and giggles, completely upsetting the well-ordered ways of Shaker life. A thought-provoking piece exploring the idea that "we need not look as far as heaven to see angels here on earth."



Front row: Christina Schwab '21 and Sarah Fritz '21; Middle row: Grace Brazunas '20 and Samantha Peacock '19; Back row: Madeleine Litka '20

The annual musical this winter was *9 to 5 The Musical*, with music and lyrics by Dolly Parton and book by Patricia Resnick. The show is based on the influential 1980 hit movie. Set in the late 1970s, this hilarious story of friendship and revenge is outrageous, thought-provoking and even a little romantic. It centers on the downtrodden working lives of three women, Violet, Judy, and Doralee. Tired of banging their heads against a low-hanging glass ceiling, these three ladies team up and the feisty fun really begins. This show's energizing, warmhearted words and music "Shine Like the Sun."



Seniors Madeline Larkin, Jillian Zupito, and Victoria Conroy

**GOOD MORNING, MERION!****Team Visited Fox 29 News Station in Philadelphia**

At MMA, we believe in the power of learning by doing—Mercy is a verb!



That's why MMA students have access to many experiential learning opportunities, from various field trips to service learning, volunteerism, student research, international opportunities, and field study. There are considerable benefits of experiential

learning. Providing an authentic context that reflects the way the knowledge will be used in real life and access to expert performances are just a few of them.

Members of the Good Morning, Merion! (GMM) team visited the Fox 29 news station in Philadelphia. The students worked on a video clip with Mr. Roccato (senior Maggie Roccato's dad) about college acceptance letters. They also toured the studio and learned more about video creation, cutting, and production.

GMM is a Merion Mercy club designed for students who are interested in working in front of—and behind—the camera to broadcast the daily school news on TV. The live news program Good Morning, Merion! airs during homeroom with special announcements and presentations, followed by a scrolling PowerPoint of text-based information. Regular members are chosen each spring for the following year's GMM homeroom. Participation as a guest anchor or special presenter is open to all other students.

Students fill all of the GMM roles, including producer, director, technical director, audio engineer, graphic designer, anchors, and writers. They take ownership of the program and put knowledge into action each school day.



## MERION MERCY LANGUAGE STUDENTS ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE

Merion Mercy's Spanish IV students participated in the Penn International Relations Conference (PIRC).

This year PIRC's region of focus is South America. Students contributed to discussion sessions about many themes such as foreign relations, peace and justice, gender equality, and more. They considered how these topics manifest themselves in South America. Attendees also benefited from presentations given by world-renowned professors and experienced, passionate undergraduates.

PIRC perfectly aligns with Merion Mercy students' commitment to women's issues, social justice, and global vision and responsibility.

**TOP:** A group of MMA Spanish IV students (seniors) at the University of Pennsylvania for a conference. Front row: Kirby Droogan and Kiki Abimbola; Back row: Teresa Vu, Janelle Ellis, Keara Gilligan, Emma Iannone, Chiara Cocelli, and Jayla Bowie

## GLOBAL VISION AND RESPONSIBILITY

### Mission Week Culminated in "Stand for Sugu"

Merion Mercy ran daily fundraising events during Mission Week for the Mercy Girl Effect, which culminated in "Stand for Sugu," a dance-a-thon to raise money for the Mercy Girl Effect.



Attendees Alexandria Lavelle '20, Phoebe DeVlieger '20, Bryn Spaide '19, Lindsey Russo '20, and Grace Lopresti '20 "Stand for Sugu"!

The MMA community has been involved in "The Mercy Girl Effect," a project combining the efforts of Mercy schools across the nation, for several years. Together, the 12-15 Mercy schools collaborate to improve the quality of life for females in developing nations with a special emphasis on girls and education. "The Mercy Girl Effect" gives young women worldwide opportunities they would not have otherwise had, and all from the dedication, service, and fundraising efforts of their peers half a world away. In recent years, the MMA students helped to raise money to build a library in Kenya, schools in Cambodia and South Sudan, and hut-houses for refugees in Nigeria (once the children had housing, they could get an address and were then eligible to enroll at the local school). This year, students will focus their fundraising efforts to the rebuilding a school in Sugu, Nigeria, which was bombed by Boko Haram. The school will also function as a community center for people of all nationalities and faiths to meet.

## SUPPORTING WOMEN AND WOMEN'S ISSUES

Stemming from their study of the role of women in the ancient world, the Latin Club recently sponsored a fund drive to support victims, young women in particular, affected by human trafficking in our area. The students collected craft items, household necessities and store gift cards to help survivors.



## STANDING IN GLOBAL SOLIDARITY WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AROUND THE WORLD

The Theology Department and the Multicultural Club presented speaker Jacques Kabore from CRS (Catholic Relief Services) in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Jacques spoke to the students on social justice and he focused on this message: "Everybody has the key to solidarity in their hand. We must use it to open the hearts of those in need. CRS is the car of food that God is sending to those in need." Merion Mercy is a Platinum member of the Global High School Partnership (GHS) with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Our students are proud to be involved with this organization, and, in concordance with them, stand in global solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world.

## Sisterhood

### RING MASS AND RECEPTION

Juniors Erin Welch, Avè Burke, Annie Butler, and Cecelia Wendel celebrate after receiving their Merion Mercy rings.



## SCIENCE WEEK FURTHER EDUCATES, INSPIRES, AND ENGAGES

Science Week is an annual celebration of science, designed for all students with events and activities and for every grade level. It is an opportunity to further educate, inspire, and engage the community with the science that surrounds our everyday world.



**Sophomores Suzie Dupnock and Gaelen Coleman**

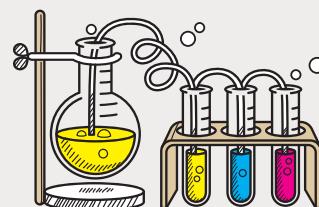
Throughout the week, the department showcases the innovative work and studies of Merion Mercy students while simultaneously providing various opportunities for students to discover and explore distinct fields-ranging from agriculture to zoology.

This year, Science Week included

several unique programs, such as butter making, an edible cell contest, and cupcakes inspired by the periodic table of elements and culminated with a visit from Terra Rose Genetics, an award-winning dairy farm, owned by Science teacher Ms. Arielle Chard's family, that brought their top-pedigreed dairy cow, Glow, to school. "Glow is actually a 'small cow,' weighing in at just about 1,000 lbs!," said Ms. Chard.

The students also studied several varieties of chickens owned by Social Studies teacher Ms. Colleen Mooney Gallagher '83. Other activities, including dairy showing demonstrations, added to the experience. This hands-on activity helped the students gain a different perspective on the study of agriculture as a whole and a reminder of its all-important role in our lives.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Thirteen Merion Mercy students attended the Saint Joseph's University's Physics Department Open House. They conducted the inverse square law in radiation laboratory and learned how to use equations within spreadsheets.

MMA Physics teacher, Dr. John Durkin, used their new knowledge to complement the curriculum of their MMA Physics class.



## ART HONOR SOCIETY PARTICIPATES IN THE MEMORY PROJECT

MMA's National Art Honor Society (NAHS) is a service club in which the student members use their creative talents in service of others.

NAHS also celebrates art scholarship and character. For the past 14 years, NAHS has participated in the Memory Project, a non-profit for which students create portraits from photos of children who are disadvantaged, orphaned, or, as with the past two years, Syrian refugees. These portraits are delivered to the children by the Memory Project. To fund this project, NAHS members host an art sale of donated art. They gather a variety of artworks, calligraphic greeting cards and framed inspirational quotes and other home decor for this silent auction held before Mother's Day. In preparation for this sale, junior Olivia Hawley, a skilled member, held a workshop to teach calligraphy to the other students, during co-curricular period.

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## MOCK TRIAL WON REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE AND ADVANCED TO THE STATE TOURNAMENT

Congratulations to Mock Trial's Gold Team who are Delaware County District Champions for the fourth year in a row and went on to earn the title of Regional Champions! With the Regional win, the team advanced to the State Tournament in Harrisburg. The State Tournament comprises the top 14 teams of the over 300 in the state! Congratulations to Ava Pecora '19 for being awarded the best attorney award and Nicole Archidiacono '20 for winning the best witness in Regional competition.



Front row: Gabriela Marziano '18, Emma Iannone '18, Kelly Thomas '18, and Lauren Viola '18;  
Back row: Faculty member Paul Clementi, Anna Norton '18, Savanna Urban '18, Katrina McDermott '18, Ciara Philips-Darby '18, Madeleine Litka '20, Ava Pecora '19, and Faculty member Suzanne Corey Walker '99  
(Not in photo: John Dougherty, Attorney Advisor, husband of Jacqueline Caserta Dougherty '03.)



## Fourteen Merion Mercy Athletes Commit to Colleges

Congratulations to the 14 student-athletes who have committed to play sports in college next year. These young women have displayed superior talent and, because of their talent, hard work, and drive, will take their skills to the next level.



**Front row:** Ann Dombrowski, lacrosse, St. Bonaventure University, Caitlin Farkas, field hockey, Sacred Heart University, Makenna Hallager, volleyball, Juniata College, Caroline Hecht, rowing, Georgetown University, Arianna Lavelle, lacrosse, Fairfield University, and Christina Mattioli, rowing, Jacksonville University; **Back row:** Kirby Droogan, rowing, Drexel University, Emma Braun, rowing, Syracuse University, Genevieve Wittrock, volleyball, Juniata College, Annina Baccile, rowing, Duquesne University, Marcella Nostrant, lacrosse, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Kathleen Murphy, field hockey, Catholic University



Bridget McTiernan, golf, Neumann University, and Leah McCray, softball, Stockton University

# YEAR-END AWARDS FOR ATHLETICS 2017-2018

All students listed are from the Class of 2018 unless indicated.

## DEDICATION AWARDS

For their constant display of exemplary spirit, dedication, and athletic service, which inspired their fellow athletes and their coaches, the Dedication Awards were presented to:

**Isabel Bielli**  
**Megan Devine**  
**Maureen McClatchy**  
**Erin Mullen**  
**Nora Pergolini**  
**Madison Wang**

## COACHES' AWARDS

Respected by their coaches and teammates for their intensity, desire, and commitment, the following students were presented with the Coaches' Award:

**Emma Davis**  
**Caitlin Farkas**  
**Caitlin Kwapinski**  
**Brooke Loonstyn**  
**Claire McKernan**  
**Bridget McTiernan**  
**Jordyn Young**

## SENIOR ATHLETE AWARD

She is the backbone of her team—spirited, dedicated, loved by her coaches and teammates. The Senior Athlete Award was presented to:

**Makenna Hallager**

## SCHOLAR-ATHLETE AWARD

In recognition of her outstanding academic and athletic achievements which have set an example for those who follow her, the Scholar Athlete Award was presented to:

**Caroline Hecht**

## GOLDEN BEAR SPIRIT AWARDS

The Golden Bear Awards were presented to the following students for their constant display of spirit and enthusiasm at Merion Mercy Academy:

**Lauren Andruszko**  
**Grace Gillespie**  
**Kelly King**  
**Dana Longo**  
**Devyn Russo**  
**Brynn Tallarida**

## TRIANGLE CLUB OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Triangle Club of Montgomery County presents an award for sports, scholarship, and service. We are very proud to have had **Caroline Hecht** represent Merion Mercy Academy.

## CHRISTIAN ATHLETE AWARDS

For their unique ability to combine athletic talents along with those qualities which embody and represent athletics in the purest sense, the Christian Athlete Awards are presented to:

**Megan Talke**  
**Francesca Tronieri**

## VARSITY SPORTS AWARDS

Awards were presented to our superior athletes whose teams cannot be successful without them on the field, courts, and water. They have exceptional talent and a drive to push themselves and teammates the extra step needed to be successful.

Our Varsity Sports Awards were presented to:

<b>Emma Braun</b>	rowing
<b>Annie Dombrowski</b>	basketball, lacrosse
<b>Kirby Droogan</b>	rowing
<b>Caitlin Farkas</b>	field hockey
<b>Caroline Hecht</b>	rowing
<b>Arianna Lavelle</b>	field hockey, lacrosse
<b>Brooke Loonstyn</b>	soccer, basketball, softball
<b>Christina Mattioli</b>	rowing
<b>Leah McCray</b>	softball
<b>Katie Murphy</b>	field hockey, track
<b>Marcella Nostrant</b>	lacrosse
<b>Genevieve Wittrock</b>	volleyball
<b>Jordyn Young</b>	volleyball, track

# MMAnnual Events



Event chairs Vince and Norma Giannini, Jeffery and Suzanne Mullen, and Kristine and Al Perry.



MMA parents Anissa and Mark Lo Sasso with friends Stephanie and Fred Short (right front and back)



MMA parents Lucy and Thomas Paschos enjoy the event.

## Sip 'n Bid

More than 250 guests attended Merion Mercy's 41st annual Sip 'n Bid dinner and auction. The theme was Miracle on Montgomery Avenue, and the event was held in Merion Mercy's new facility.

Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and silent auction preceded a sit down dinner and the always-exciting loud auction. Guests bid on countless gift certificates and dining experiences, Caribbean vacations, golf packages, Eagles tickets, and many one-of-a-kind gifts, such as an engraved captain's chair. All proceeds from the event directly benefit students at the Academy.



Merion Mercy alumnae from the Class of 1999 connect at the auction:  
Beth Cooney, Colleen Ruane Unger, Alexis Browsh, MMA Faculty, Suzanne  
Cory Walker, MMA Faculty, Kate DiSipio Avitabile, and Ellie O'Brien-Fabeny.

*Many thanks to all of our donors, guests, volunteers, and sponsors for making Sip 'n Bid 2017: Miracle on Montgomery Avenue such a success!*

### GOLD SPONSORS

The Mullen Family  
The Licata Family  
The Keating Family  
The Giannini Family

### SILVER

The Lord Family  
The Bender Family  
The D'Angelo Family

**SAVE THE DATE FOR**  
**Sip 'n Bid 2018: Winter Wonderland**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2018**

Moira Dougherty '18 hits the runway.



# The Mother-Daughter Fashion Show

Many extraordinary women from the MMA community enjoyed an evening out at the Mother/Daughter Fashion Show.

This annual event is a fun way to celebrate the unique bonds of moms/caregivers, daughters, grandmothers, sisters, and other special women. MMA offers sincere thanks to the generous and talented team of volunteers, especially event chairs Linda DiOttavio Murray '86, Robin Lavelle, and Mary Jane Reilly, and all of the attendees. Never forget: "Life takes us to unexpected places, but MMA brings us home."

Event chairs Linda DiOttavio Murray '86, Robin Lavelle, and Mary Jane Reilly



Senior volunteers Ava Hamann, Claudia Conway, Isabel Bielli, Makenna Hallager, Megan Talke, Kristen Sobocinski, Kelly King, and Brianna McCaffrey



**SAVE THE DATE FOR**  
**The Mother-Daughter Fashion Show**  
**MARCH 24, 2019**



# ROOMS TO GROW

Walk into Merion Mercy, and you'll see that some things remain the same. The central corridors, the building's foundation since 1953, are instantly familiar to all who love the school. Look north, though, and you'll see a big change—a stunning new wing whose bright, innovative spaces reinforce what has always made a Merion education great, while taking it into the future.

Let's start on the second floor. Merion's Innovation Room was designed with student-centered learning in mind. Whiteboard-painted walls, flexible furniture, Promethean ActivPanel, interactive whiteboards, and pull-down electricity extensions allow for endless possibilities in the way the room is used. Technology is quickly adapted to the topic. Students move around and share ideas, finding a place in this interactive, hands-on studio that is comfortable for them. The result is an environment that—like several recently renovated classrooms and many of today's workplaces—promotes collaboration, curiosity,

resourcefulness, and independence and makes learning more engaging and fun.

Faculty can reserve time in the space, allowing them to take lessons to the next level. Mathematics Department Chair Aimee Quinn shares, "The keys to the Innovation Room are: flexibility, collaboration, and engagement. When we go in there with our math classes, everyone is up at the wall working—either individually or with one or more partners—to solve problems. It is very easy to walk around and see how our students are thinking about their solutions. Students can also see how their classmates solved a problem and can

initiate important conversations about their processes. It is easy to quickly group students together to work on a program or activity, then rearrange them. Students have responded positively to the room to the point where they ask why we can't meet in there every day."

Creativity continues in the adjacent Frances M. Maguire '53 Art & Design Gallery. Thanks to its open space, incredible light, and effective furniture, these new art rooms provide a high-performance learning environment that mimics those in higher education and professional workplaces. The space has spawned new courses, including Foundations of Digital Design, and enabled more students to take advantage of MMA art classes.

Art Department Chair Maria Miele Boyd '72 says, "I think it makes a statement about how Merion sees art as an integral part of the overall curriculum and of students' learning. Students can learn about how important art is to our everyday lives and not just think of it as a 'special.' Students witness this commitment: whether in a one-semester course or a full-year art major, they can feel and see how important it is to create with purpose."

As an added benefit, the placement of these two new spaces next door to one another not only connects them visually, but creates opportunities for projects that bring art and innovation together—putting the "A" in STEAM.



The second floor of the new wing also includes other collaborative learning spaces as well as the Counseling Center, including both Personal and College Counseling.

According to College Counselor Theresa Yerger, “It is such a welcome and inviting space for college representatives to meet with seniors. We hosted more than 100 colleges this year along with other parent and student programs. The space allows us to have family meetings, which were not possible in our old offices, and sharing this space with the school counselors allows for greater collaboration. This ensures that we are meeting the needs of each and every student.”

If you instead enter the new wing on the first floor, from what was the back

of the building, you feel immediately welcomed in the Connelly Lyceum. Here in the reception area, the school mantra—Live Mercy, Seek Justice—is sealed into the floor.

To the right is a donor wall, a reminder of all those who have invested in our school, and the new Dining Commons. Far more than a place to get (delicious) food, the renovated, multipurpose dining hall provides opportunities for social interaction and for continuing education outside the classroom.

For most students, this happens a few times a day. Boasting big windows, a view of the beloved statue of the Blessed Mother, a gas fireplace, WiFi station, and café area, the Dining Commons is an inviting spot to share an animated

lunch. But it is also designed for groups to meet for activities or for girls to use as a gathering space, essential for social and emotional learning. In its first year, this hub hosted scores of gatherings for students, alumnae, parents, and friends. Like a family’s kitchen, it has quickly become the place where the community congregates and feels most at home.

Attached to the Dining Commons is an energy-efficient kitchen with large areas for in-house food preparation that will yield healthier food choices in a more eco-friendly environment. In accord with the Mercy Core Value of “Global Vision and Responsibility,” the new kitchen addresses today’s and tomorrow’s needs by:

- **Featuring fresh, local, seasonal produce when available.**
- **Offering sustainable menu items.**
- **Recycling in both kitchen and dining room.**
- **Reducing water usage and waste.**
- **Reducing the number of weekly deliveries.**

Off the Dining Commons is the Spirit Shop and a new gymnasium with athletic offices, lockers, and other amenities. A stunning space for MMA teams and physical education classes, the gym is important to school life far beyond athletics. It is used by more than half of the school’s 72 clubs, teams, and organizations as well as for assemblies and other gatherings, such as dances, science fairs, graduations, service projects, reunions, admissions events, and liturgies. In one way or another, the gym serves all of the school’s constituents: students, parents, faculty/staff, and alumnae.

Merion Mercy’s new wing is beautiful, to be sure. But it is also purposeful, promoting a student-centered, holistic approach that, while not new to the school, now has room to become fully realized. **M**

# COMMENCEMENT 2018



## IN THEIR WORDS...

***"When we process out of these doors, when we throw our caps up in the air, the mercy does not cease.***

*The world does not heal itself. The population does not suddenly understand how to love one another. We have much to do, and all of the resources to do it. As educated young women of mercy, we have the duty and the obligation to take what we have learned and put it into action. We must be the faces of mercy on our college campuses, whether they are small or large, near or far, secular or religious. We must take all the tools and skills we have obtained and put them to use, whether this is taking time to volunteer, organizing campaigns to advocate for the rights of all people, or creating something new and life-saving. We must be mercy. When we see despair, we must show mercy. When we see inequality, we must work so that every person is shown mercy. When we are faced with institutionalized injustice and those in power fighting to maintain things that are wrong, we must create change through mercy.*

*Each and every girl, each and every one of my sisters, in this chapel, has the potential to be a driving force of mercy on her college campus, in her community, in her world."*

—MARY PASSARELLA '18

123  
GRADUATES



565  
LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE FROM

146  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



MMA STUDENTS EARNED  
**\$20,383,470**

in merit scholarships, including full tuition packages.

Scholarships include QuestBridge, National Merit, the McNulty Scholar, and the Liberty Scholar.



# UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE DECISIONS

THE SCHOOL LISTED IS THE STUDENT'S INSTITUTION OF CHOICE.

Aderonke Abimbola Temple University	Janelle Ellis Villanova University	Dana Longo Saint Joseph's University	Gabriella Piccone Widener University
Anne Alexandre Amherst College	Liza Esposito Jefferson University	Brooke Loonstyn Drexel University	Alexandra Pizzi University of Pittsburgh
Emma Andrews Villanova University	Sara Ewing West Chester University	Giulia Luciano Widener University	Mary Procopio The University of Scranton
Lauren Andruszko West Chester University	Caitlin Farkas Sacred Heart University	Kathryn Lynch Saint Joseph's University	Madison Richards American University
Lauren Angelina Temple University	Simone Fera The Catholic University of America	Meredith MacKenzie Elon University	Margaret Roccato University of Notre Dame
Mary Arena Loyola University Chicago	Abigail Fisher West Chester University	Nina Malitas Auburn University	Sarah Romberger University of Delaware
Annina Baccile Duquesne University	Grace Gillespie Temple University	Gabriella Martino Xavier University	Cara Rossi Temple University
Nicole Bercaw Temple University	Keara Gilligan University of Notre Dame	Gabriela Marziano Villanova University	Devyn Russo University of Pittsburgh
Jenna Bertin University of Delaware	Quinn Guiday The University of Tampa	Christina Mattioli Jacksonville University	Angelina Sciumi Jefferson University
Josephine Biancaniello Saint Joseph's University	Julia Halas University of Pennsylvania	Brianna McCaffrey Purdue University	Katrina Siki The Catholic University of America
Isabel Bielli Temple University	Makenna Hallager Juniata College	Maureen McClatchy Pennsylvania State University	Kristen Sobocinski Loyola University Maryland
Morgan Blackmon St. John's University	Ava Hamann Sacred Heart University	Leah McCray Stockton University	Lauren Starker Pennsylvania State University
Jayla Bowie Ursinus College	Jingxuan Han University of Washington	Katrina McDermott University of Pennsylvania	Caroline Stefan Saint Joseph's University
Emma Braun Syracuse University	Sinéad Healy University of Pittsburgh	Mary McDermott The University of North Carolina	Megan Talke University of Notre Dame
Brijette Brown Emory University	Caroline Hecht Georgetown University	Margaret McGrath The University of Scranton	Brynn Tallarida Saint Joseph's University
Maggie Browne University of Pittsburgh	Natalie Holstein Villanova University	Claire McKernan Rutgers University	Kelly Thomas Georgetown University
Kylie Campisciano Fordham University	Autumn Hunt George Mason University	Bridget McTiernan Neumann University	Dianna Tran Saint Joseph's University
Chiara Cocelli Hillsdale College	Emma Iannone Cornell University	Rylee Mesi The University of Scranton	Francesca Tronieri St. John's University
Claudia Conway Villanova University	Sophia Kennedy The Catholic University of America	Erin Mullen Bucknell University	Savanna Urban Fordham University
Flora Cruz Morales University of Pennsylvania	Mary Eileen Kent Temple University	Kathleen Murphy The Catholic University of America	Lauren Viola Drexel University
Alannah Daly Salve Regina University	Valerie Kerwood West Chester University	Dominique Nardella Widener University	Lam Vo Drexel University
Russ-Ahna Davenport Susquehanna University	Kelly King Fordham University	Zenia Nasevich Drexel University	Teresa Vu Villanova University
Emma Davis University of Pittsburgh	Katie Kubasko Pennsylvania State University	Anna Norton University of Delaware	C. Suman Walker Temple University
Miranda Della Vecchio High Point University	Caitlin Kwapinski University of Delaware	Marcella Nostrant Virginia Commonwealth University	Yuxin Wan Stony Brook University
Gabrielle DeStefon Pennsylvania State University	Madeline Larkin Drexel University	Nicole Novelli Widener University	Zihan Wang Boston College
Meghan Devine University of Delaware	Arianna Lavelle Fairfield University	Madeleine Nowak Loyola University Maryland	Mary Grace Winterle The University of Scranton
Ann Dombrowski St. Bonaventure University	Megan Leahy Villanova University	Mary Elizabeth Passarella University of Pennsylvania	Genevieve Wittrock Juniata College
Haley Donnelly Widener University	Jessica Lehman Hendrix College	Annalise Patti Jefferson University	Grace Young Saint Joseph's University
Moira Dougherty Fairfield University	Alyssa Levine Tufts University	Nora Pergolini Fordham University	Jordyn Young Northeastern University
Hannah Droogan Drexel University	Chuchu Li Lehigh University	Jane Pham Pennsylvania State University	Jillian Zupito Hofstra University
Noha El Toukhy Haverford College	Ava Lo Sasso West Chester University	Ciara Phillips-Darby New York University	

## IN THEIR WORDS...

**"To live mercy is to love and have compassion for others.** In order to serve others, we need to sympathize and empathize with others. To seek justice is to do what is right and have integrity. In order to serve others, we must do what is fair even if it is not for our best interest or personal gain...together, mercy and justice balance one another... My hope for our class is to live mercy and seek justice, especially when it comes to our dreams. Also, I want us to remember,

'Our dreams are not meant for us; they are meant for the people whom we are called to serve.'"

-BRIJETTE BROWN '18



**"I believe having big dreams sets us apart.** As educated, young, merciful women, we are responsible for leaving our mark on the world. Through Merion, we have been encouraged to dream big. [We] are future politicians, lawyers, designers, artists, athletes, doctors, educators, scientists, and so much more...leaders in their schools and communities who will create a platform [to] make a difference in this world.

Let us never forget the sisterhood that has empowered us and the Mercy core values that will forever be installed within us."

-DEVYN RUSSO '18

## Excellence Medals

**The Excellence Medal for Highest Cumulative Achievement:**

**JULIA HALAS**

**The Excellence Medal for the Highest Achievement in the study of Art:**

**ZENIA NASEVICH**

HONORABLE MENTION:

**AVA LO SASSO**

**The Excellence Medal for the Highest Achievement in the study of English:**

**JULIA HALAS**

**The Sister Elizabeth Carroll Award for the Highest Achievement in the study of French:**

**ANNE CHRISTINA ALEXANDRE**

Honorable Mention:

**SIMONE FERA**

**The Excellence Medal for the Highest Achievement in the study of Latin:**

**EMMA ANDREWS**

Honorable Mention:

**GABRIELA MARZIANO**

**The Excellence Medal for the Highest Achievement in the study of Mathematics:**

**JULIA HALAS**

Honorable Mention:

**MEGAN LEAHY**

**The Excellence Medal for the Highest Achievement in the study of Music:**

**MAGGIE BROWNE**

Honorable Mention:

**CHRISTINA SUMIN WALKER**



Annalise Patti, Francesca Tronieri, Nicole Bercaw, Sara Ewing, and Dana Longo



Natalie Holstein, Emma Braun, Mary Grace Winterle,  
Brooke Loonstyn, and Devyn Russo

**The Excellence Medal for the  
Highest Achievement in the  
study of Science:**

**JULIA HALAS**

Honorable Mention:

**GABRIELA MARZIANO**

**The Excellence Medal for the  
Highest Achievement in the  
study of Social Studies:**

**KATRINA McDERMOTT**

Honorable Mention:

**JULIA HALAS**

**The Excellence Medal for the  
Highest Achievement in the  
study of Spanish:**

**JULIA HALAS**

Honorable Mention:

**KEARA GILLIGAN**

**The Excellence Medal for the  
Highest Achievement in the  
study of Theology:**

**KATRINA McDERMOTT**

Honorable Mention:

**JULIA HALAS**



## Claddagh Awards

The Irish claddagh is a symbol befitting the cultural heritage, corporal works, and spiritual legacy of Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Often as an adornment to a ring, the claddagh depicts a pair of hands holding a heart topped by a regal crown. These three elements form a kind of trinity: the heart, it can be said, represents hospitality and compassion; the hands: service and care; the crown: leadership and fidelity to one's cause. Here at Merion Mercy Academy, we celebrate the ways in which these symbols similarly embody our students' exceptional character and achievement. Today we honor three graduating seniors, in particular, who have been recognized by their peers and their teachers as demonstrating personal qualities in keeping with one of each of the claddagh's special features.

The Heart of Mercy Award is presented to a graduating senior who exemplifies the essence of Mercy. It is an honor bestowed upon the person who has shown continuously that she lives in the spirit of Catherine McAuley, offering time, effort, talent, and compassion to ensure a better life for her peers. Mercy is doing and acting out of love, believing in it and living it. The person receiving this award is recognized for her commitment to the values of the Gospel and her example of acting with Mercy in the name of God.

**By nomination from the faculty and seniors, the Heart of Mercy Award was presented this year to:**

**KELLY KING**

The Service Award is presented to a graduating senior in acknowledgment of her demonstrated spirit of servant leadership. While meeting her academic requirements, this student has also responded generously to the Gospel call to action. Dedicating herself to easing the burdens of those in need, this young woman has shown exceptional commitment to the core value of living mercy and seeking justice through her volunteer efforts with MMA-sponsored

projects and/or community-based programs.

**By nomination from the faculty and seniors, the Service Award was presented this year to:**

**NORA PERGOLINI**

The Loyalty Award is presented to a graduating senior who has demonstrated extraordinary loyalty and pride in being a member of the Merion Mercy school community over the past four years. She embodies the Academy's mission to educate the whole person through her own academic and personal excellence. Beyond the moment, she always sees the bigger picture of what it is to represent the ideals of Merion Mercy, demonstrated through her courage to speak and work on behalf of her school community. She acts with conviction and integrity in all she does, and she understands the importance of being a woman of Mercy.

**By nomination from the faculty and seniors, the Loyalty Award was presented this year to the following two individuals:**

**MIRANDA DELLA VECCHIO AND MARGARET ROCCATO**



# MERI UNION

## Doubly Blessed

### WITH REUNIONS THIS SCHOOL YEAR

With the building project underway in the spring of 2017, the reunion for that year was moved to October of 2017. The Meri-Union for spring of 2018 took place in May of 2018, doubly blessing MMA with two wonderful reunions in the 2017-18 school year.

#### TOP **OCTOBER 2017**

The Golden Circle medals are annually given to alums in attendance who are celebrating their 50th reunion. Members of the class of 1967 (the Golden Circle honorees in October) gather after the liturgy.

Front row: Sharon Gough Sullivan, Patricia Anderson Mitala, Dolores Coletta Endelman, Mary Falcone Montgomery, Kathleen Hunt Mang, Barbara Eni Ristaino, Antoinette Aversa Sturm, Patricia Lawler Komsa, Anne Moynihan Prudente, Lucie Slattery Cleary, Marybeth Troncelliti Gutchess; Back row: Laura-Jane Rovito Pasternak, Mary Elizabeth McNichol O'Connor, Theresa Mellon Little, Therese Gielmi Wainwright, Lynne Price Brenan, Laura Moye, Cindi Patterson Spink, Maureen Daly Cooper, Susan Pillion Taylor, Patricia O'Connell Oakes



#### TOP

Beloved teachers Sister Patricia Talone, RSM, Sister Mary Christella, RSM in Chapel leading in song.

#### BOTTOM

Friends from Class of 2002 Jessie Hearn Barlow, Katie Brogan Ozeck, Patricia Spinelli Barnett, and Gina Ruggieri





#### TOP LEFT

Members of the class of 1968 (the Golden Circle honorees in May):  
Front row: Ellen Wallace, Chris Mecke, Eileen Daly Killeen, and Jeanne Devine; Middle row: Bea Hickey, Margaret Hatfield Balderman, Shamal Nolan, Margaret Connors, and Maureen McKenna Sexton; Back row: Beth Parson Davidson, Donna Collins Ramondo, Anne Brogan Bannon, and Angelica Cassizzi Cprek

#### TOP RIGHT

Friends from the Class of 1988: Liz Langran, Rose Caione, Meg Lamb Root, Gina Minutella Raiser, Allegra McHugh Cosgrave, and Lisa Smith Sgro

#### MIDDLE RIGHT

Ladies from the Class of 1982: Front row: Madeline DiPasquale Rausch, Barbara Colantuono Harrison, Amy Williamson DiTrolio, Mary Elizabeth Ellington Agnew, Michelle O' Grady King, Rosemary Smith Barton, Michelle Lee Strong, Cathy Reimel Hamilton, Michele Leuzzi, Mary Anne Howley Keith, and Joan Capuzzi Giresi; Back row: Megwin Finegan Hoopes, Elizabeth Lopusniak Welshman, Susan Maguire Stefan, Cindy Clarke, Janet Schubert Cusack, Barbara Reaph Revere, and Amy McNamee Sherman

#### BOTTOM

Classmates from 2012 connect with a faculty favorite:  
Alexandra Sullivan, Michaela Shea, Sister Beth Flannery, RSM, and Gemmika Champion.



## SAVE THE DATE

**MERI-UNION • MAY 4, 2019**

**Classes ending in 4 and 9:  
2019 is your reunion year!**

All alumnae and current and former faculty  
are invited to the Mass and the Reception.  
The Reunion Dinner is for classes ending in 4 and 9.

For more information, contact Barbara Colantuono  
Harrison '82 at 610-664-6655, ext. 120 or  
[bharrison@merion-mercy.com](mailto:bharrison@merion-mercy.com).



# *“Girls Will Be Girls, but Merion Girls Will Be...”*

**By: Caroline Hecht ’18**

*Erringer (Errin) Helbling ’08 continues to pursue out-of-this-world dreams. Errin, a West Point grad, now works at SpaceX in Supply Chain Organizational Material after five years serving as an Army Engineer Officer on active duty.*

She was a key contributor to the successful launch of the Falcon Heavy rocket and its side boosters from Cape Canaveral earlier this year. Errin worked on the landing gear for the boosters, two of which returned safely to the base, side by side, and can now be used again. This development to reuse rockets may one day allow people to affordably travel to Mars! Her mom Karen says, “While at MMA Errin was asked to bring in song lyrics to analyze as poetry for her English class. Ten years later that same song—David Bowie’s ‘Is there life on Mars?’—played during the launch. My daughter’s foundations at Merion provided her with the intellectual curiosity and confidence to pursue out of this world dreams!”



Errin credits some of her success today to the opportunities she had in high school, especially the ability to be involved in many different aspects of school life, a characteristic of Merion she recognizes as “rare” among area high schools. “Unlike a bigger public school, Merion is small, so it allows you to take on a bunch of different opportunities that otherwise you would never think you would be able to do.” Errin serves as an excellent example of the broad involvement Merion girls often exhibit. She studied music in Merion’s music major program. She excelled academically. And to complete the triple-threat, she was a three-sport athlete, competing in soccer, swimming, and track.

One of Errin’s most lasting impressions of the impact of a Merion education is the unique way Merion girls carry themselves. “The women at Merion are incredible, capable women, but they walk with humility and grace.” When attending alumnae events, she recalled being impressed both with the accomplishments of fellow Merion graduates as well as the class they exhibited. Errin testifies to the veracity of “Girls will be girls...but Merion girls will be ladies.” She traces this characteristic of Merion girls to the “sense of service” instilled in high school, through initiatives like the Mercy Volunteer Program (Errin travelled on MVP Arizona).

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*“Unlike a bigger public school, Merion is small, so it allows you to take on a bunch of different opportunities that otherwise you would never think you would be able to do.”*

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After her success at Merion, Errin was recruited to play DI soccer at West Point. One might expect the transition from all-girls Merion to 80% male West Point to be challenging, but it didn’t faze Errin. “Merion did such a great job at giving us the confidence to take on any challenge.” She graduated from West Point with a degree in systems engineering. For five years, she served on active duty as an Army Engineer Officer.

She received training in construction and mechanical and geospatial engineering. She attended Army Airborne School and completed paratrooper training. Errin completed her active duty in a variety of locations in a variety of roles. “I did a bunch of different engineering tasks, like using explosives to take down obstacles so soldiers could go past an obstacle, or building bridges, or looking at geospatial data that we collect.” While in the military, Errin also served as Military Social Aide to the President, working in the East Wing of the White House. Her responsibilities were quite varied, not unlike her time at Merion, “It was a very well-rounded, diverse experience that Merion did a great job preparing me for.” She describes her time in this role as “a lot of fun.”

Her advice for Merion girls today? She noted the importance of “being well-rounded, learning as much as you can, and trying to translate that into ways you can impact the world.” She hopes current Merion students recognize that “you’re doing all of this education for a reason, and you’re doing all these different activities for a reason, and ultimately you’re trying to do some sort of act of service and impact something.”

Errin continues to write her life’s story and shares, “I’m looking forward to where the future takes me, and Merion will always be a part of that.” 

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## Nominate an Alumna!

It is customary that this sections features alumnae, who are doing extraordinary work and making an impact in diversely positive ways.

We believe that MMA students start their high school journeys as girls with big dreams and grow into women of passion and purpose. We invite you to nominate an alumna for a future “Girl Will Be Girls, but Merion Girls Will Be...” profile.

Please send any submissions, including alumna’s name and why you suggest her for the profile, to Kristina Stanton Cawley ’90 at [kcauley@merion-mercy.com](mailto:kcauley@merion-mercy.com).

# class notes



## Share Your News!

Merion Mercy Academy encourages all alumnae to share news in the Class Notes section of *Mater Matters*. To contribute, send your news to [kcaley@merion-mercy.com](mailto:kcaley@merion-mercy.com) or write to: Kristina Stanton Cawley '90, Alumnae News, 511 Montgomery Ave., Merion Station, PA 19066.

*(Class Notes may be edited for length, grammar, and content.)*



## JOAN HIGHT: Honorary Alumna

As beloved English teacher Joan Hight retired after more than 30 years of service to the Merion Mercy community, it only seemed fitting to officially call her “ours” by naming her an Honorary Merion Mercy Alumna.

In addition to her strong work ethic and professionalism, she has fully given of herself to the students of Merion Mercy. Joan’s distinguished record of service to MMA, uncompromising integrity, and commitment to our students and programs are impressive and greatly appreciated.

## The Thirties

**Margarette Dougherty Connor '33** turned 103 this year. Here she is with her daughter and great granddaughter! She maintained that her years at Mater were “some of the best of her life.”



## The Forties

**Nola Porreca Paulson '45** wrote in, “I just turned 90 years old and enjoying my children and grandchildren. I have a grandson getting married! I have enjoyed many trips over my years, including Italy, France, and Great Britain. Hoping to reconnect with any girls from my years at Mercy!”

**Mary Lu Baxter Donnelly '49** expressed gratitude for her dear friends from Mater (**Carolyn Coady Lea '49, Joan Daley Graves '49, Delories Richardi '49, Margaretta Richardi '44, and Eileen McCarthy Epp '49**) and the wonderful memories they continue to make. She shared, “We have enjoyed another year of monthly lunch meetings.”

## The Seventies

**Nell McCormack Abom'79** won two Keystone Awards from the Public Relations Society of America Central Pa. Chapter on behalf of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance, the state leader in child abuse prevention. Nell was honored for Media Relations and Special Events for the PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids Awards Ceremony. As president of Nell McCormack Abom Communications, a public relations firm in Harrisburg, Pa., Nell writes, “I am proud to put into practice the values we learned at MMA – advocating for social justice and the human rights of the most vulnerable among us.”

## The Eighties

**Roberta Trombetta, Esq. '85** is the Founder and CEO of CB Community School in Roxborough, Pa. The school is the first private school in the country with a mission to engage and educate high-school-aged students in the foster care system and help them to graduate with a plan for postsecondary success and independence. Currently the school has

# class notes

70 students and has surpassed local and national graduation rates for kids living in foster care. Prior to founding this school, Trombetta spent her career as a staunch advocate for the well being of vulnerable children. From her time as the Managing Director at the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to her time as Chief of Operations at Philadelphia Family Court, she has firsthand experience with helping children that the system has failed. CB Community Schools is doing its part to see that these children are given the support that they need to succeed in life.

**Fran Bateman Bisselle '87** has served as the Head of School at Hathaway Brown School. Located in Shaker Heights, Ohio, Hathaway Brown School provides an inclusive environment that challenges girls in grades K through 12 and boys and girls in the Early Childhood Program. Founded in 1876, Hathaway Brown is committed to a fusion of academic and experiential learning. Fran was recently profiled by cleveland.com. Fran holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Boston College; an M.A. in Liberal Studies with a concentration in History from Wesleyan University; and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies with a concentration in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment from the University of Vermont. She served for nine years as Head of School at Maple Street School, a K-8 independent school in Manchester Center, Vermont. Maple Street was established by best-selling novelist and Academy Award-winning screenwriter John Irving and his wife, Janet.

## The Nineties

**Karen O'Brien '90** shared, "The Law Office of Karen E. O'Brien is thrilled to announce the opening of its boutique law practice in Radnor, focusing on special education law, disability planning, and elder law. Our boutique practice is distinguished in being able to provide a one-stop solution to your family's special education, elder law, and disability-related legal needs. Our comprehensive services include acting as your advocate,

## MMA Alumnae Association's 4th MLK Day of Service



● MMA alumna Tyl DiJulia Sadoff '95 and her daughter Ruby share Rock on Rubes' mission and the goals of the Day of Service.

Merion Mercy Alumnae Association's 4th Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service brought together dozens of extraordinary women of Mercy and their families. The group collected supplies for bath and bedtime needs as well as books for Cradles to Crayons in Philadelphia. And, they put together cards, crafts, and gifts for Rock on Rubes, a non-profit started by MMA alumna Tyl DiJulia Sadoff '95 and her family. Rock on Rubes is a youth movement designed to spread positivity, confidence, and joy through random acts of kindness to people and places when it's least expected. As part of their work on MLK Day of Service,

the volunteers made gifts to share: lavender and eucalyptus bags packaged with positive messages and customized shells to be given to anyone who could use a boost and be reminded that they are special and have unique gifts. Volunteers could take one of their creations to give to someone, and the rest will be passed out at future Rock on Rubes projects.



● Young volunteers Courtney Kenefic (daughter of Amanda Coll Kenefic '95) and Avé Kenefic (daughter of Bronwyn Reichert Kenefic '94) help organize the donations before sending them off to Cradles to Crayons.

# class notes

your disability planner, and/or your litigator in several complementary areas of law that quite often overlap."

**Kristen Iskandrian '95** earned her BA in English from the College of the Holy Cross in 1999. She started writing fiction in the early 00s, and attended graduate school at the University of Georgia, where she received both her M.A. and her Ph.D. in English Literature and Creative Writing. Her work has been published in places such as *Tin House*, *Ploughshares*, *McSweeney's*, *Joyland*, *Crazyhorse*, and many other publications. In 2014 her story "The Inheritors" won an O. Henry Prize, and in 2015, she was a juror for the O. Henry prize, along with Michael Parker and Tessa Hadley. Her debut novel *Motherest* was published in August 2017. Long-listed for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, it was named a "Best Book of 2017" by *Publishers Weekly* and the editors of *Lenny*, and called a "defining book of 2017" by *The Wall Street Journal*. *Motherest* also received a glowing review from the *New York Times*. Her story "Good with Boys" will be included in *The Best American Short Stories 2018*, forthcoming this fall. Currently, she lives in Birmingham, Alabama, with her husband Brian Connell and their two daughters. A managing editor by day, she is working hard on a collection of short fiction, as well as a second novel, and with whatever time and energy she has left, scheming and dreaming of opening a bookstore in her neighborhood. Kristen shares, "Beloved Merion English teachers Mrs. Hight and Mrs. Chapman (RIP) were so integral in shaping me as both a reader and a writer! Long live MMA!"



## The 00s

**Keeley Berry Seymour '02** shared, "I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and have been working at Center for Families as a Primary Therapist. Center for Families provides services for teens struggling with mental health and substance use issues. I also have my own private practice (part-time) in Wayne. I live in Bryn Mawr with my husband and our two-year-old daughter, Charlotte."

**Caitlin McCusker Patil '03** has moved to Washington, DC. She left the WilmerHale law firm to take a position on the legal staff of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. She and her

husband, Chetan, welcomed their first child, Keira McCusker Patil.

**Lindsay Kane Kelley '04**, "My husband James and I welcomed a son, John (Jack) Andrew Kelley, on August 24, 2017. Jack has already met MANY of his mom's Merion friends. He can't wait to get a tour of Merion's campus soon, and he also eagerly anticipates his invite to his first Harvest Moon Dance in 14 or 15 years!"

**Irene Murphy '04** is excited to announce that she received an award from the Christian Brothers District of Eastern North America. She has been working at a Lasallian High School in Washington, DC for the past 7 years and is one of the top ten nominees for the Distinguished Lasallian Educator of the Year 2017.



• Look who bumped into each other at *The Today Show*! Kelly McKelvey '04, a three-time Emmy Award winner, who now works as a producer for *The Today Show*, and Molly Mulrain '07, who is a publicist for *National Geographic*. Molly visited *The Today Show* for a segment taping. Kelly shared the photos and behind-the-scenes point of view, "We didn't overlap much during our years at MMA, but we became good friends last year after we worked on something together for *Good Morning America*!"

# class notes



● Dorothy Wechsler '08 shared, "I married Zach Garippa September 30, 2017. We met at Boston College where we graduated in 2012. I had to have some of my favorite MMA girls in my bridal party: Christine Wechsler Rayer '95, Maribeth Wechsler Boyle '98, Anne Wechsler '10, Beth Moran Canuso '08, Amanda Friedlander Fowler '08, Lauren Hallinan '08, and Theresa Testa Stewart '08." Dorothy is a Registered Nurse at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

**Katie Valosky '08** was the guest speaker at the Senior Assembly for the Class of 2018. Since graduating from MMA in 2008, Katie earned a degree in Psychology, along with minors in Peace and Justice and Theology, from Villanova University where she was inducted into several honor societies including Phi Beta Kappa. She subsequently joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC), a year-long volunteer program for recent college graduates, and served as a caseworker at a day resource center for the homeless in Baltimore, MD. The summer after she finished her year with JVC, she was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice and earned her master's degree in Social Work. She completed social work internships at both the University of Pennsylvania's Abramson Cancer Center and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia NICU. Upon graduating from Penn, she began her social work career at Mercy Philadelphia Hospital (part of the Mercy Health System and founded by the Sisters of Mercy), a small community hospital in West Philadelphia. At present, she found her way back to Penn and has been a social worker for cardiac surgery patients at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for the last year. She also participates in hospital-based initiatives to address the IV opioid crisis in Philadelphia as part of her role.

**Caite Soper Hafensteiner '09** is currently a Navy helicopter pilot in San Diego. Caite recently married Samuel Brooks Hafensteiner at his family home in Selkirk, NY, on September 2, 2017.

**Meghan Githens Scannapieco '09** was the Philafieldhockey Winning Coach of the Week in February, 2018. Meghan has served as a Mayhem coach for three years, across all age divisions, but this year has been like no other! Her U12 Bears captured gold at all three of their tournaments. Hungry for more, the Bears entered their first U14 tournament and took down bigger and more experienced opponents, adding another gold medal to their collection. In addition to coaching the U12 Bears and the U14 Mayhem Orange team, Meghan works full-time as a relation manager at a private equity firm.

**Krisandra (Kacy) Cuenta '10** shared, "On May 26, 2017, I graduated from Northeastern University School of Law. I received my Juris Doctor degree with a double concentration in Business and Commercial Law and Intellectual Property and Innovation. During law school, I was a legal intern with Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales in Mexico; Root Capital in Cambridge, MA; and Fidelity International in London. I was also a law clerk with Innovative Business Law Group (now Partridge Snow & Hahn)

in Needham, MA. Moreover, I passed the New York State Bar examination, achieving a qualifying score that can be transferred into every Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) jurisdiction. Finally, I recently accepted a job offer as a Junior Attorney with Addgene, a global nonprofit plasmid repository based in Cambridge, dedicated to accelerating research and discovery by improving scientists' access to useful research materials and information."



**Lisa Bevilacqua '11** will begin Georgetown Law this fall, joining her MMA classmate **Maddie Bardi '11**, who just finished her first year there.

**Emily Buongiorno '12** graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in International Health at Georgetown University in 2016; then pursued her Master of Science of Nursing at University of Virginia (M.S.N./C.N.L., 2018). She now works as a pediatric transplant nurse at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital



● **Olivia Nostrant '14 and Kaely Kyle '17** after winning the Women's Lacrosse 2018 Big South Championship for High Point University.

# class notes

**Elizabeth Loftus '14** wrote, "This past spring break, I went on a service trip with my school, the University of Scranton. All applicants were assigned various trips (much like how MMA assigns students for MVP), and I ended up in a group with MMA alumna, **Moira Garvey '17**. We had a blast serving at St. Michael's Mission in Window Rock, Arizona where we worked with Navajo adults with developmental disabilities. How fun that our Merion community often comes together in these special ways."



● Haverford Township Library ran a contest for students to submit artwork for their upcoming capital campaign, "Library on the Corner." Congratulations to Tara Boomgamonong '17, whose submissions were chosen by the committee to be used for the campaign. A representative from the library met with Tara at Merion Mercy and presented her with a certificate and token of appreciation for her hard work.



## Weddings

**Zach Garippa to Dorothy Wechsler '08**  
on September 30, 2017

**Samuel Brooks Hafenstein to  
Caite Soper '09** on September 3, 2017

## Arrivals

**Josh and Justina Horvath King '96, MMA Former Faculty**, a son, Grayson Charles

**Adam and Katie Murtha Dickman '02**, a son, Charlie Thomas

**Sergio and Alicia Savarese Dos Santos '02**, a daughter, Lilyanne Delia

**Michael and Ann Pelicata Muth '02**, a son, Thomas Robert

**Sean and Kacy Moran Powers '02**, a daughter, Callan Margaret

**Keith and Keeley Berry Seymour '02**, a daughter, Charlotte

**Jason and Sarah Schramm Bonta '03**, a daughter, Cora Maeve

**Chetan and Caitlin McCusker Patil '03**, a daughter, Keira

**James and Lindsay Kane Kelley '04**, a son, John (Jack) Andrew

**Kevin and Alicia Kelly Miller '04**, a son, Clark Edward

**Tim and Ellen Purcell Ryan '04**, a son, Benjamin Thomas

**Drew and Clare Nicholson Zimmerman '04**, a daughter, Kerry Lucia

**Justin and Marissa Patterson Fiordimondo '08**, a son, Alessandro

**Dan and Jacqueline Gaval Fitzpatrick '08**, a daughter, Caroline Theresa

**Pat and Jeannie O'Brien, MMA Staff**, a daughter, Virginia Jean





# IN MEMORIAM

*Merion Mercy Academy expresses its condolences to the family and friends of the following members of our community. Please keep their families in your prayers.*

**James (Jim) Bruder, Sr.**

husband of Marie (Maripeg) Mita Bruder '74,  
brother of Maryanne Bruder Flannigan '55

**Ian Burke**

father of Jane Burke '14 and Avè Burke '19

**John Condart**

brother of Sister Sally Condart, RSM, MMA Staff

**Clayton Daily**

father of Aimee Quinn, MMA Faculty, grandfather of Megan Quinn '05,  
Colleen Quinn '09, and Becky Daily '10

**Joseph Dougherty**

father of Mary Dougherty vanDam '80

**Guido Giordano**

father of Sonia Giordano Colavita '86, grandfather of Daniella Colavita '16

**Barbara Johnson**

mother of Diane Johnson DiCicco '97, MMA Trustee,  
grandmother of Molly Lord '14 and Maggie Lord '19

**Mary Helen Holdelner Kattermann '58****Janet B. Farrell Leavy**

mother of Siobhan Leavy '95, grandmother of Elizabeth Sack '13,  
Megan Sack '15, and Caroline Sack '21

**Joe Ortlieb**

father of Maribeth Ortlieb Boehmer '80

**Michelle Meehan Patterson '73****William Patterson**

husband of Michelle Meehan Patterson '73 RIP

**Anna T. Saltzman**

mother of Sister Anna Saltzman, RSM, MMA Staff

**Elizabeth "Betty Jo" (BJ) Saraceno**

mother of Noel Saraceno '12

**Margaret Shropshire Small '47****Anne Therese (Teesie) Larkin Smith '48**

sister of Caroline Larkin '51, grandmother of Johanna Sturm '06 and  
Marie Sturm '16

**Charlotte Denise Stroud**

mother of La'Tasha D. Mayes '99

## Merion Mercy Alumnae Association

### Merion Mercy would like to once again thank the 2016-18 Alumnae Association Officers

**Maureen Costello '00** (President), **Kellianne Nicholas '06** (Secretary), and **Kathy Williamson Doyle '71** (Treasurer) for the talent and leadership they have brought to the group during their term. With their leadership, the Alumnae Association grew and built on exciting programs and events. Many thanks as well to the 2016-18 Advisory Committee.

### We welcome and congratulate the 2018-20 Alumnae Association Executive Officers

**Maria Jose Morinigo '90, Michelle Williams '96, and Meagan Sloan '06** (Chair).

Please note: the Alumnae Association amended its bylaws. Please visit [www.merion-mercy.com/alumnae](http://www.merion-mercy.com/alumnae) to review the updated bylaws.

# Mater<sup>+</sup>Matters

MERION MERCY ACADEMY

511 Montgomery Avenue  
Merion Station, PA 19066



## BE A PART OF MERION MERCY HISTORY!

You can still advance MMA Upward & Onward.

All gifts of \$2,500 or more to the Upward & Onward Capital Campaign are honored on our donor wall (this total includes any previous gifts to the Building on Mercy Campaign). For information, please contact Kelley Kuyat, Chief Advancement Officer, at ext. 180 or [kkuyat@merion-mercy.com](mailto:kkuyat@merion-mercy.com).